

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed July 25, 2002, has been carefully reviewed and considered. Claims 1-27 and 29-38 were pending in the present application. By way of this amendment and reply, claims 1, 14, 30, 33 and 38 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced and no new issues are raised. Accordingly, upon entry of the amendment, claims 1-27 and 29-38 are pending for consideration.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended to Applicant's undersigned representative during a telephone interview conducted on September 16, 2002. During that interview, claim amendments were discussed which would more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art and would overcome the outstanding rejections. Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, 30, 33 and 38. With respect to claim 38, the Examiner suggested amending the claim to recite that access to the levels of service is sequential. Claim 38 has been so amended. The remaining independent claims have been amended to make more clear the progression through multiple levels of service providing the user with progressive greater degrees of interaction. The progression has been further defined as levels of interaction where a second level is adapted to respond to the user at a more detailed level than a first level of interaction.

In the Office Action, claims 1-17, 19-24 and 29, 30 and 37 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Douglas et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,039,688). In addition, claims 18 and 31 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over the same reference. Also in the Office Action, claims 14, 20, 25-27, 30 and 32-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Brown (U.S. Patent No. 6,168,563). In view of the amendments to the claims, these prior art rejections have been overcome.

These claim amendments notwithstanding, Applicant maintains that for reasons already of record, the cited references do not anticipate or render obvious the claims of the present invention. To summarize simply Applicant's previous remarks, neither reference discloses or suggests the "levels of service" configuration and structure of the present invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance and solicits early notification of the same. Should there be any questions or concerns regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative by telephone.

A petition for a three-month extension of time, along with the appropriate fee, have been submitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

JANUARY 27, 2003

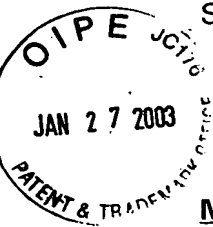
Date



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Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicant(s) hereby petition for any needed extension of time.

**MARKED UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE****Marked-Up Claims:**

1. (Twice Amended) A multiple level service system comprising a processing device responsive to inquiries received over a communications medium, wherein the processing device identifies a level of service required based on said inquiries, provides a user access to said identified level of service and provides the user with sequential access to additional distinct levels of service having progressively greater degrees of interaction at multiple levels of interaction, said multiple levels of interaction including a first level of interaction with the system and a second level of interaction with the system, said second level of interaction being adapted to respond to said user at a more detailed level than said first level of interaction], each of said levels of service-being-distinct].

14. (Four Times Amended) A networked system linking individuals with a server that provides one of the group consisting of medical, veterinary, and other health care information on subjects of interest to an inquirer, and provides the inquirer with sequential access to a plurality of levels of service having progressively greater degrees of interaction with health care workers [professionals, each of said plurality of levels of service being distinct, from pure information gathering to medical diagnostic and therapeutic interventions] at multiple levels of interaction, said multiple levels of interaction including a first level of interaction with a health care worker and a second level of interaction with a health care worker, said second level of interaction being adapted to respond to said inquirer at a more detailed level than said first level.

30. (Four Times Amended) A method of providing one of the group consisting of medical, veterinary, and other health care information on subjects of interest to a user, the method comprising:

determining an initial desired level of service access for the user, said initial level of service access including a first level of interaction;

accepting an inquiry from the user;

composing a search request based on the user inquiry;

searching a database, using the search request, in order to identify information requested in the user inquiry;

providing the search results to the user;

accepting a follow-up inquiry from the user which entails providing a higher level of service access than said initial level, wherein said higher level of service includes a second level of interaction, said second level being adapted to respond to said user at a more detailed level than said first level of interaction; and

allowing the user to request a consultation with a health care professional and, if desired by the user, providing the user with a list of possible health care professionals.

33. (Thrice Amended) A health care system for delivering health care to a patient at any one of a plurality of distinct levels of service, said system providing the patient with sequential access to remaining levels of said plurality that provide progressively greater degrees of interaction at multiple levels of interaction, said multiple levels of interaction including a first level of interaction with the system and a second level of interaction with the system, said second level of interaction being adapted to respond to said patient at a more detailed level than said first level of interaction[, each of said plurality of levels of service being distinct], the system comprising:

a server, communicatively coupled to a network, for receiving and transmitting signals;

a monitoring device, communicatively coupled to the network and adapted to be connected to the patient, which is adapted to monitor the patient and to transmit patient information to the server over the network when a highest level of service is utilized in the health care system;

a treatment device, communicatively coupled to the network and adapted to be connected to the patient, which receives a treatment signal from the server over the network and is adapted to administer a treatment to the patient based on the treatment signal received when the highest level of service is utilized in the health care system.

ended

38. (Twice Amended) A networked health care system that provides a client with sequential access through a plurality of levels of service, said system comprising:

a means for providing a first level of service, wherein said first level of service provides primarily informational data to a user that has requested information, the informational data being provided to the user at a specific level of sophistication based on user-entered data that pertains to the user's ability to understand data provided to the user,

a means for providing a second level of service, wherein said second level of service receives and processes comments from the user on an adequacy of the informational data provided to the user, and wherein a determination is made as to whether a referral to a professional is needed,

a means for providing a third level of service, wherein said third level of service provides for a client-professional relationship to be established between the user and a health care professional who advises the user concerning additional information needed and other actions which should be taken in relation to health care treatment of the user, and

a means for providing a fourth level of service, wherein said fourth level of service provides for physical interaction between the user and the health care professional, by way of monitoring devices or treatment devices directly coupled to the user, and wherein messages to and from the monitoring devices and the health care professional are provided so as to allow the health care professional to monitor patient parameters and to administer management advice for the user.